DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 094 331 CS 001 221

TITLE A Report of the European Meeting of the International Reading Association (2nd, Unesco, Paris, December 13-14, 1973).
INSTITUTION International Reading Association, Paris (France). European Office.
PUB DATE Dec 73
NOTE 11p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Conference Reports; Meetings; *Professional Associations; *Reading; Reading Improvement; Reading Programs; Reading Research; *World Problems
IDENTIFIERS *International Reading Association

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the activities included in a seminar on reading which was held to discuss ways in which the International Reading Association (IRA) organizational affairs could improve professional matters dealing with reading in the European area. The contents include: "Proceedings Related to Organizational Matters," which contains introductory remarks and discusses the legal aspects of a national affiliate's relationship with the association; "Reports from National Reading Associations," which includes reports by Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and several other countries; "Discussions About Future Conferences"; "Recommendations to the European office," which discusses suggestions for the work of the European Office of IRA in Paris; "Data Being Gathered by the IRA European Office," which lists information being collected by the secretariat on various topics; "Suggestions for Other Professional Activities," which looks at topics touched on during the discussion; "Contributions from Observers and UNESCO Participants," which looks primarily at the world literacy problem; and "Concluding Comments," which discusses the value of the meeting. (WR)

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED 094331

Second European Meeting of the International Reading Association Unesco, Paris, December 13-14, 1973

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
International Reading Assn.
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER

Summary

This is a report of the activities included in a seminar on reading which was held in Room VII of Unesco House, Paris, to discuss ways in which Association organizational affairs could improve professional matters dealing with reading in the European area. The first of such seminars was held in December, 1971.

A list of the participants and observers from 15 countries and the Unesco Secretariat is appended to the document. Languages used were French, English, and Russian.

Proceedings Related to Organizational Matters

After introductory remarks of welcome by IRA President Millard Black in which he emphasized the original Canadian involvement in the origins of the Association, and the nongovernmental, cooperative nature of the activities of IRA for the improvement of reading, Eve Malmquist of Sweden, who chairs the IRA International Development Committee, presided over the meeting.

A short discussion of the legal aspects of a national affiliate's relationship with the Association by Executive Secretary-Treasurer Ralph C. Staiger took place in which the following simple obligations of a national affiliate to the IRA were stipulated. By June 15 of each year, they must report the names and addresses of their officers; report their activities during the year; forward copies of the minutes of official meetings for the record; and provide copies of newsletters and other information related to council activities as well as the names of all local councils organized within the national affiliate. Each individual member of a national affiliate who is also an IRA member may vote in the election of IRA officers, and each national affiliate is allowed one vote at the annual IRA Assembly of Delegates.

Reports from National Reading Associations

Austria

The Austrian National Section, IRA was founded in November, 1973. President Richard Bamberger reported that its main goals are the promotion of scientific research in the field of reading; documentation and information work on reading; collaboration in setting up the curriculum of institutions for pre- and in-service training of teachers; holding meetings and congresses and setting up study groups on various subjects; cooperation with similar institutions in Austria and abroad, especially with the International Institute for Children's Literature and Reading Research, and the Austrian Children's Book Club. Special emphasis will be placed on furthering the aims of the Austrian pedagogical academies and other teacher training institutions in the country, and on the research projects of the International Institute. One of the first tasks of the Austrian Section will be handling the local arrangements for the Fifth World Congress on Reading to be held in Vienna, August 12 to 14, 1974.

The periodicals "Jugend und Buch" and "PA-Kontakte" will report regularly on reading and research and the work of the Austrian Section.

CS 001 221

Denmark

President Mogens Jansen reported that almost 25% of all teachers in Denmark are affiliated, with the numbers fluctuating between 7,000 and 10,000 during the year. The group is stressing new trends in reading, and cooperation with other teacher organizations and with the government. It is continuing to develop its journal, Laesepaedagogen, published 8 times a year and expanding its publication activities with booklets of interest to teachers. At present it is working together with a newly organized group of reading consultants to build courses in reading, and to establish cooperative activities.

Finland

President Irja Hietanen indicated that membership of the governing body represents all parts of the country, and that membership now is about 300, but it is increasing fast among teachers speaking both Swedish and Finnish, as well as special teachers of various kinds, librarians, psychologists, and researchers. A summary of the activities of the Finnish Institute for Educational Research of Jyväskylä at the University was included with the seminar documents. The Sixth Nordic Conference on Reading was held in Helsinki in August, 1973, in cooperation with the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish reading associations. The proceedings will be published in the Finnish, Swedish and, possibly, the English languages. A membership journal is issued four times a year, and a booklet on Special Education was recently published by the Association. One of the programs conducted during the year included a speech teacher from the Soviet Union who talked about the training of speech specialists in the Soviet.

France

Association Francaise pour la Lecture President Mme. Andrée Girolami-Boulinier discussed the findings of five Commissions of the Association, through which some of the AFL's most important work is done and which are regularly reported in the AFL quarterly bulletin. The first is devoted to Research on International Relations; the second is on Audiovisual Approaches to the World of Today; the third is Analysis of Content, which includes both readability and a value scale, as well as a consideration of the publics which are to be reached; fourth is a series of presentations by authors of the learning methods included in their materials; last is an analysis of the present state of school libraries and the requirements for them.

Mme. Girolami-Boulinier voiced her concern that these activities become very individualistic, and cited a recent meeting designed to be of interest to persons outside the teaching profession which was devoted to the reader and the non-reader. The content included the reading habits of adults as well as children. She also indicated that the AFL at present served a group in Paris and its environs, but that attempts are being made to reach other French groups.

Germany

Past President Renate Valtin indicated that the modest activities of the German group, which started in 1970, were the promotion of Scientific research in reading--and the translation of research; the holding of meetings, including a second German conference on remedial work in reading; and the issuing of a newsletter, which the editor prints at no charge. The researchers involved are working on a multimedia approach, using television and radio, which will eventually reach ten to fifteen thousand teachers. Until now, she said most of the work of the German Association has been that of individuals rather than work of the organization as such.

Luxembourg

Paul Dickes, representing this newly organized group, told of the beginnings of the group, with 65 members who were mostly teachers, psychologists and primary school inspectors. Regular meetings are scheduled every two months, with the present aim being to interpret research into everyday practice. There are also more general activities designed to develop membership quantitatively and qualitatively, as well as to develop libraries. Professor Dickes suggested that it was difficult to reach secondary teachers who considered that reading was taught only in the primary school. He also pointed out the special linguistic position of the Luxembourg group as a link between German and French culture.

Norway

Kjell Skogen, Vice-president of the Norwegian National Reading Association reported that the approximately 100 members were scattered in many parts of the country, and that Norwegian teachers are members of many organizations. Work has been concentrated in two areas; the exchange of information, especially with those in other Scandinavian countries, and the setting up of local cells of 5-10 persons to discuss their problems and new developments in reading.

Sweden

Eve Malmquist, President, indicated that when, in 1964, he had organized the Swedish Council he had contacted specialists throughout the country and set up a national conference. As a result, local councils were set up. At present there are 8 councils with about 1500 members, and the group has been working with other teacher associations and teachers colleges by providing speakers, and demonstrations. Decisions made at meetings to issue statements on the prevention of reading disability and the continuity of reading development have been used for political influence. Malmquist also mentioned cooperation with other Scandinavian countries through the publication of the Skandinavisk Tidskrift and the organization of the biennial Nordic Conferences on Reading.

Switzerland

President Francois Rostan of the Association Suisse pour la Lecture reported on the activities of the national organization which now includes all of the Swiss linguistic areas. It is about to issue a Bulletin entitled Lesen/Lire/Leggere. The first meeting of the national association is scheduled for 16 February, 1974. Cooperative relationships have been established with pedagogical institutes, psychologists, and Berne University. Three study days are being planned for the spring on (1) the evaluation of methods of teaching reading; (2) the development of reading; and (3) reading disturbances. A consideration of speed reading, and the reading of adults will also be included. Coordination is not yet perfect, M. Rostan said, but progress is being made.

United Kingdom

President Donald Moyle announced that the 11 year-old United Kingdom Reading Association was conducting a special recruitment campaign which had already added 600 new members to the 2000 at which membership had stabilized. With 26 local councils and a rapidly increasing membership, the UKRA is trying to reorganize its administration and approaching charitable bodies to obtain funds to establish a permanent secretariat.

In addition, he mentioned that an International Seminar, open to all, would be included in the annual UKRA Conference in 1974. The activities of the UKRA have fallen into a pattern: an annual conference of 300-400; regional conferences in the U.K.; varied activities in local councils; a number of workshops and study groups; delegates' conferences, which serve as a training ground for officers; publications including a journal, Reading, a newsletter and books and booklets. Cooperation with other groups and the vastly changed training for teachers have made the UKRA's influence greater than its members would suggest. Three past presidents, for instance, are members of the Bullock Committee, to which the Association as such has submitted evidence and research reports.

Reports from Others

Seminar participants from Belgium, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands, reported on activities related to reading in their countries. Vincent Greaney of Ireland and Theo Brus of the Netherlands agreed that in their countries there are many organizations, but reading is not considered a central topic. In addition, Jean Burion cited the bilingual problem in Belgium. Anna Lorenzetto cited the three regional divisions of Italy, indicated the needs for followup of adult literacy activities and the opportunities for the creation of a national reading association in Italy.

Discussions about Future Conferences

The Vienna Congress program scheduled for August 12-14, 1974 was presented by John Merritt, who is chairing the Program Committee. A preliminary brochure describing the plans was distributed, and the French-speaking delegates were assured that simultaneous interpretation in French-English and English-French would be provided for the plenary sessions.

In addition, the possibility for a specifically European meeting linked to national conferences was suggested, and the warning was raised by several delegates that one of the national meetings could not be made an international one without considerable expense for interpretation and great attention to the program.

The possibility of regional meetings in Europe, perhaps by language group, was broached, and the succussful Scandinavian meetings were held as a possible example.

Recommendations to the European Office

A number of suggestions for the work of the European Office of IRA in Paris were elicited from the participants.

The need for providing materials for Reading Today International was highlighted by several conferees. The need for knowing when deadlines occurred was suggested, as well as the possibility that a special theme might be used as the focus of each issue, and treated from a European viewpoint. It was also suggested that the content be written in simple language, so that individuals for whom English and French is not the brother tongue could read the newsletter easily.

It was suggested that whenever possible, complete names and addresses of contributors and institutions whose experiences were reported be mentioned, as well as the complete addresses of individuals who are the international contacts of national affiliates.

The titles of new books about reading published in Europe, and the names and addresses of institutions which provide specialized training in reading were requested, as well as news about experimental classes and curricular changes.

It was also thought possible that apparently unanswerable questions on reading could be sent to Reading Today International; the newsletter could also be accumulated as a kind of "Who's Who in Reading," and be used in suggesting whom interested persons could contact. Bylines on contributions were indicated as a means of encouraging members to submit items to the editor at the European office.

It was also suggested that the newsletter be regularly sent to the editors of teachers' journals and other educational journals, and that these editors be requested to indicate if they would be prepared to publish information on IRA activities.

Dissemination of information about undeveloped research areas was requested by Dickes, Greaney and Valtin, who suggested that a working party of about 15 persons meet at the Vienna Congress. Also discussed was the need for definitive translation of English technical terms in reading into German and other languages.

Data being Gathered by the IRA European Office

Information being collected by the secretariat on various topics was listed:

1. An index of specialists by country and by specialty
2. A survey of Universities and teacher training colleges providing courses in reading
3. Information on national institutions providing various services, such as visits to schools, and information on educational systems
4. Information on bodies in various countries responsible for exchanges of teachers.

It was emphasized that this information is incomplete and that information about the various subjects would be welcomed from the delegates and other sources.

Suggestions for Other Professional Activities

Numerous topics were touched upon during the discussion, for example the need for a library of reading tests in various languages. Mention was made that testing has been carried on for many years, with varying results.

The problems of migrant workers in Europe were also mentioned, and some of the steps being taken in various countries touched upon the complexity of the problem, usually dealt with superficially, was brought up by John Cairns, Director of the Division of Adult Education in Unesco, who indicated that Unesco is planning to devote serious attention to the problems of European Adult migrant workers as well as their children in the near future. In essence, language differences contribute to the reading problems which exist. One important influence is the length of the worker's intended stay in a country. If he does not intend to stay for more than a few months or a year, his motivation for learning the language is very low.

Contributions from Observers and Unesco Participants

Observers were invited to participate freely in the discussion, and several special comments were made in areas of specialization by members of the Unesco secretariat which stimulated general discussion.

In addition, the observer from the Soviet Union expressed his interest in the topic of the meeting and emphasized his country's concern with the topics being discussed. He recounted the successful fight against illiteracy in the Soviet, and the continuing campaign to interest individuals in reading, and to provide books, starting from the age of five years through adulthood. In 1971, he said, 3000 titles in 48 different languages, totalling 280 million copies, were issued in the Soviet Union, and groups of individuals, reading clubs and libraries available in all "cultural houses," are continuing the initiatives begun by International Book Year.

The contents of reading materials, the uses to which books are put, and the goals of authors, he said, were very important. One goal, he suggested, is the use of books in the interest of peace and international understanding. Since books are the basic instrument of knowledge, the interaction of organizations concerned with books could be an instrument for the consolidation of peace.

P. de Clerck, director of Literacy Programs for Unesco emphasized the well justified priority of functional literacy programs on the part of Unesco, and cited statistics which showed a decline in the estimated percentage of illiterates in the world, even though the population is rising spectacularly.

	Adult Population	Illiterates
1950	1,570,000,000	44.3%
1960	1,869,000,000	39.3%
1970	2,287,000,000	34.2%

In world regions, illiteracy is greatest in the Arabic States and Africa (73.7%), while Asia has an estimated 46.8% and Latin America a 23.6% illiterate population. He emphasized that these percentages are based on official figures, and that the data are not always comparable. In some cases, a person is considered literate if he can sign his name; in others, if he has gone to school until he is eight years of age. The number of illiterates, therefore, is much greater than the above statistics reveal when human needs are taken into consideration. Rural areas have greater illiteracy than urban, and females are more likely to be illiterate than males.

P. de Clerck emphasized that an effective solution is still being sought. In Japan and in the Soviet Union the adoption of universal compulsory schooling was successful. Work with the adult population in Indonesia and in Iran was successful not only in combatting illiteracy, but also in unifying the countries, linguistically and politically.

The complex nature of the literacy problem, with its historical, sociological and cultural aspects has made the intensive program approach give way to systematic field programs, based upon the situation in the specific country concerned and backed by operational seminar training programs and post literacy activities.

Jean Millerioux, Director of the Unesco Division of Book Promotion, described the program of action of this Division which is based upon information collected during International Book Year 1972. Almost all of the 131 member nations of Unesco participated in this celebration, which developed a great new awareness of reading and the ways many groups can work together.

The themes of IBY '72 are being retained as long-term goals, and the program suggestions for action are what can be done rather than what should be done. Each nation is invited to set up a national committee for book promotion. Regional Unesco machinery is being set up in Bogota, Tokyo, and Karachi, with possible centres in Cairo and in Sub-Sahara Africa.

The involvement of nongovernmental organizations such as IRA is specifically provided for, and continued support and ideas were requested. The help of Jean Robertson, as IRA delegate to the Bogota meeting at which an International Book Committee as a centralizing authority was founded, was gratefully acknowledged, and the assistance of the present seminar was solicited. Millerioux asked the group to level criticism at the program of action, Books for All.

In the limited time available to the group, a number of ideas directly related to the Book Development Program were listed:

1. Conduct a study of reading tasks in various countries which would involve a survey of the kinds of materials available, and an examination of the frequency and universality of reading as well as the consequences of not reading competently.

2. Establish relationships between national affiliates and Unesco national committees to identify persons working in the program, organize meetings on the topic, and publish the results.

3. Establish permanent working groups to develop ways in which school authorities and educational bodies can cooperate with the book development program.

4. Utilize the Vienna Congress to organize support groups, especially for research.

5. Recognize the need to institutionalize and reinforce the Book Development Program.

6. Organize a seminar on the contribution of audiovisual aids to the promotion of reading (analysis of past experiences and future perspectives).

7. Promote the development of libraries in schools.

8. Provide materials for distribution to the developing countries.

9. Promote better reading through the publication of materials in local languages, especially in Africa.

Paul Coste, Chief of the Structures Section of the Division of Curricula and Structures of Education in Unesco, expressed concern about reading difficulties as they influence the problem of wastage in schools--the millions who start off hopefully but end as school failures.

He indicated that this might be the great unrecognized problem, and suggested that it is not likely that any action will be taken on Unesco's initiative, unless interested groups make specific thoroughly-conceived suggestions. IRA with support from Unesco National Commissions in member countries, could influence coming Unesco programs along these lines.

His comments were tantamount to a challenge to the Association.

Concluding Comments

IRA President Millard Black stressed the values of the meeting as it drew to a close. First, the value of interpersonal relations and getting to know one another personally; second, the value of the seminar to the officers and Secretariat of IRA administratively and for planning purposes; third, the value of the recommendations related to the Book Development Program and other cooperation with Unesco; fourth, the value derived from discussions of the ways in which the European reading community may cooperate in the future.

Emmanuel Eguiazarov of the Soviet Union expressed his thanks for being invited to participate, and presented a gift of several children's books to various participants and to the IRA European Office library.

Francois Rostan of the Swiss Reading Association thanked the organizers for their work, and expressed the thanks of the group for the conditions of mutual respect and friendship in which the seminar was held.

Appendix

SECOND EUROPEAN MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

DEUXIEME REUNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA LECTURE

Unesco, Paris, 13-14 décembre 1973
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS/LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

AUSTRIA/AUTRICHE - Austrian National Reading Association

Richard Bamberger, Director, International Institute for Children's, Juvenile and Popular Literature, Fuhrmannsgasse 18a, 1080 Wien

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE

Jean Burion, Département des Recherches, Institut des Sciences Psycho-Pédagogiques, Université de l'Etat à Mons, Place du Parc 18, 7000 Mons

DENMARK/DANEMARK - Danish National Association of Reading Teachers

Mogens Jansen, President; Danish Institute of Educational Research, 101 Nr. Emdrupvej, 2400 Søborg

FINLAND/FINLANDE - Finnish National Reading Association

Irja Hietanen, President; Tilhentie 21 F, 20600 Turku 60

FRANCE - Association Française pour la Lecture

Andrée Girolami-Boulinier, Présidente; 6 rue Voisembert, 92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux

GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC/REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE D'ALLEMAGNE - German National Reading Association

Renate Valtin, Universität Hamburg, Fachbereich Erziehungswissenschaft, Von-Melle-Park 8, 2 Hamburg 13

IRELAND/IRLANDE

Vincent Greaney, Educational Research Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin 9

ITALY/ITALIE

Anna Lorenzetto, Professeur à l'Université de Rome, 88 Via Garibaldi, 00153 Roma

LUXEMBOURG - Association Luxembourgeoise pour la Lecture

Paul Dickes, Président; Service de Psychologie, Institut de Pédagogie, Walferdange

NETHERLANDS/PAYS-BAS

B. Th. Brus, Institute for Educational Sciences, Erasmusbuilding (20th floor), Erasmuslaan 40, Nijmegen

.../...

NORWAY/NORVEGE - Norwegian National Reading Association

Kjell Skogen, Vice-president; Statens speciallaererskole, Granäsen 4, 1347 Hosle

SWEDEN/SUEDE - Swedish National Reading Association

Eve Malmquist, President; Department of Educational Research, Teachers College of Linköping, Storgatan 28 582 23 Linköping

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE - Association Suisse pour la Lecture

François Rostan, President; Inspecteur scolaire, 30 Chemin de Bellevue, 1005 Lausanne

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI - United Kingdom Reading Association

Donald Moyle, President; Edge Hill College of Education, St. Helens Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4QP

CHAIRMAN OF FIFTH WORLD CONGRESS PROGRAM COMMITTEE/PRESIDENT DU COMITE DU PROGRAMME DU CINQUIEME CONGRES MONDIAL SUR LA LECTURE

John E. Merritt, Faculty of Educational Studies, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, England

OBSERVERS/OBSERVATEURS

USA/ETATS UNIS

Nathan Pitts, USA Permanent Delegation to Unesco, 1 rue Miollis, 75007 Paris, France

USSR/URSS

Emmanuel Eguiazarov, First Secretary, USSR Permanent Delegation to Unesco, 1 rue Miollis, 75007 Paris, France

UNESCO

J.C. Cairns, Director, Division of Adult Education, Unesco, Paris

P. de Clerck, Spécialiste des Programmes, Division de l'Alphabétisation, Unesco, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France

Paul Coste, Secondary Education Section, Division of Education Structures and Teacher Training, Unesco, 7 Place de Fontenoy, Paris, France

Jean Millerioux, Directeur, Division de la Promotion du Livre, Unesco, Paris

WORLD CONFEDERATION OF ORGANIZATIONS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION/CONFEDERATION MONDIALE DES ORGANISATIONS DE LA PROFESSION ENSEIGNANTE

Thomas Rehula, Special Assistant, WCOTP, 5 Chemin du Moulin, 1110 Morges, Switzerland

IRA BOARD AND SECRETARIAT/CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION ET SECRETARIAT DE L'IRA

Millard H. Black, President, 1714 LeFlore Drive, Whittier, California 90603 USA

Constance McCullough, President-elect, 80 Vicente Road, Berkeley, California 94705 USA

Ralph C. Staiger, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware 19711 USA

Elisabeth Boucherant, Director, European Office, 54 rue de Varenne, 75007 Paris, France

Eva Adjiman, Assistant, European Office, 54 rue de Varenne, 75007 Paris, France

Isabella Failla, McManis Associates, Washington, D.C. 20036 USA